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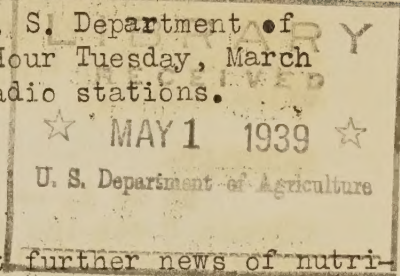
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NEWS OF VITAMIN C RESEARCH

A radio interview between Sybil L. Smith, Senior Experiment Station Administrator, Office of Experiment Stations and Wallace L. Kadderly, Chief, Radio Service, broadcast in the U. S. Department of Agriculture portion of the National Farm and Home Hour Tuesday, March 28, 1939, by NBC and a network of 100 associated radio stations.

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KADDERLY:

Today Sybil Smith is with us again to report further news of nutrition research at the State Experiment Stations. She's going to bring us up to date on the vitamin that's been getting the most attention at the Experiment Stations lately -- vitamin C. A March day like this is a good time to talk about it, too, if I know my vitamins. How about it, Miss Smith?

SMITH:

Well, spring is the time when the effects of winter diets lacking in vitamin C may show up in symptoms of scurvy -- or if not actual scurvy, at least a run-down feeling, -- or "spring fatigue," with aching bones and joints.

KADDERLY:

And, that used to be particularly true in northern climates where people had only dried and stored foods in winter.

SMITH:

Yes, and the trouble disappeared like magic after spring greens came to the table.

KADDERLY:

Today, such troubles aren't so common, are they, because we can get foods rich in vitamin C all winter.

SMITH:

Yes, but if we don't choose our foods wisely or prepare them properly, trouble is likely to appear as spring comes on -- even if it is nothing more than weariness, lack of pep -- and perhaps irritability.

KADDERLY:

And now will you tell us what vitamin C is?

SMITH:

Well, it's a kind of acid which nature puts in most fresh foods and chemists have now learned how to obtain from these foods and even to manufacture in the Laboratory. They have found it to be soluble in water and rather easily destroyed by heat and air.

KADDERLY:

Hmm --- that explains how easily vitamin C can be lost from foods.

(over)

SMITH:

If you buy vitamin C in the drug store, you will get a bottle of small white tablets labelled cevitic acid -- C-E- -V-I-T A-M I-C (for C vitamin). But I prefer a glass of orange or tomato juice to a little white tablet.

KADDERLY:

So do I, -- but after all the discovery of the chemical nature of vitamin C was the starting point of much of the research on that vitamin today. And doesn't this new research show that most people need more vitamin C than they get in the average American diet?

SMITH:

Yes, the newer tests show that although people can "get by" on fairly small amounts of vitamin C, they need much more of it to have the best possible health and to resist infections.

KADDERLY:

How are the Experiment Stations using these newer tests for vitamin C.

SMITH:

Well, some are attempting to find out how much vitamin C the students of their own colleges need. At the New York Cornell Station for instance they found out that all of the young women they have tested thus far probably need more vitamin C daily than is found in a small glass of orange juice; and some need as much as a large glass or measuring cupful. I'm afraid that very few are getting as much as a large glass of orange juice each day, judging by tests that have been made on college girls in 2 of the New England State Colleges and in 5 in the Northwest.

KADDERLY:

How do the girls of these two regions compare in the amount of vitamin C they are getting?

SMITH:

So far, the records show that the girls of the Northwest are somewhat ahead.

KADDERLY:

Probably that is because in Washington and Oregon the longer growing season and the abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables make it easier for them to have these foods all winter.

SMITH:

That may be partly the reason, but as a New Englander I'm inclined to think that traditional food habits may have something to do with it. However, in both the Northeast and Northwest the girls who had been at college for awhile, scored better than when they entered college.

KADDERLY:

Probably the college meals contained more vitamin C foods than the girls had been getting at home.

SMITH:

Perhaps so. Another reason may be that the girls learned more about vitamin C in nutrition classes, and became more interested in choosing foods that provided this vitamin.

KADDERLY:

Does that mean simply taking more orange or tomato juice?

SMITH:

Not necessarily. Most raw foods contain some vitamin C and several are quite rich, such as young green cabbage and green peppers.

KADDERLY:

What about cooked foods?

SMITH:

Well, cooked vegetables lose much of their original C, partly from heating but even more because the vitamin dissolves in the cooking water. At the New York State Station they found that sometimes as much as two-thirds of the vitamin C went into the cooking water.

KADDERLY:

In other words if you use the cooking water, even cooked vegetables will count for vitamin C. What about the vitamin C in potatoes? I used to hear that the failure of the potato crop in Ireland spelled scurvy, but nowadays nobody seems to think about eating potatoes for vitamins.

SMITH:

Perhaps that's because we now have so many foods richer in vitamin C that we forget how much the humble potato has helped and can still help. A good-sized potato is only about a third as rich in vitamin C as one orange, but if you eat potatoes generously, and cook them properly, you'll get a good share of your vitamin C quota. A recent study at Montana showed that potatoes hold their vitamin C best when baked, next when steamed, then boiled, then mashed, and last of all fried.

KADDERLY:

So to get your vitamin C you must choose the right foods, and if you have to cook them, cook them so as to save the vitamin C. By the way, does the variety of a fruit or vegetable have anything to do with the amount of vitamin C it contains?

SMITH:

Yes, the Massachusetts Station found that tomato varieties differ greatly in their vitamin C. The Massachusetts, Washington, Virginia, and Wisconsin Stations have all been testing apples and finding a great difference in them. A recent report from Wisconsin states that you would have to eat from 3 to 8 pounds of Jonathan and Delicious varieties each day to get enough vitamin C but only 1 pound of Northern Spy.

KADDERLY:

Now, Miss Smith, a final question. Will you list the amounts of a few common foods which will supply enough vitamin C for best health?

SMITH:

Well, for an adult like you or me, Mr. Kadderly, a full measuring cup or large glass of orange juice every day will give an abundance, or perhaps you would prefer 2 glasses of tomato juice, or 3 large baked potatoes, or 6 of the richer apples, or a bowl of fresh raw green cabbage and green peppers, or a large dish of strawberries -- or --

KADDERLY:

I'll take a little of each -- if it's all right with you. We're obliged to you, Miss Smith, for this roundup of the work that's being done on vitamin C at the different state laboratories over the country.

Miss Sybil Smith of the Office of Experiment Stations in the Department of Agriculture has brought us this report on the latest information about Vitamin C -- one of the vitamins so necessary for good health.

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